

REMARKS

The Office Action of November 1, 2007 has been reviewed and the comments therein carefully considered. Claims 18-26 and 33 were withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner in view of an earlier restriction requirement. Accordingly, claims 17, 28-32, 34-36 and 38-44 are pending in this application, and claims 17 and 36 are in independent form.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claims 17, 28-32, 34-36 and 38-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for obviousness based upon United States Patent No. 6,666,586 to Wu et al. (hereinafter "the Wu patent") in view of United States Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0150350 to Zimmer (hereinafter "the Zimmer publication"). In view of the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection.

As defined by amended independent claim 17, the present invention is directed to a sleeve mount comprising an interior for accommodating and securing a cylindrical sleeve having a longitudinal slit extending along an entire length of the cylindrical sleeve. The sleeve is provided in an adapter of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions into the adapter. The sleeve mount has means for securing the sleeve against rotation about a sleeve axis. The means for securing are arranged in a central part of the sleeve mount and are restricted to the central part of the sleeve mount. The sleeve mount is made up of two separate mount parts. The means for securing are arranged and retained between the mount parts.

As defined by amended independent claim 36, the present invention is directed to a sleeve mount comprising an interior for accommodating and securing a cylindrical sleeve having a longitudinal slit extending along an entire length of the cylindrical sleeve. The sleeve is provided in an adapter of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions. The sleeve mount has means for securing the sleeve against rotation about a sleeve axis. The means for securing are arranged in a central part of the sleeve mount and are restricted to the central part of the sleeve mount. The means for securing are designed to engage in the longitudinal slit of the cylindrical sleeve. The sleeve mount is made up of two separate mount parts. The means for securing are arranged and retained between the mount parts.

The Wu patent is directed to an optic adaptor that connects first and second optic fibers in an aligned but spaced fashion for attenuation of optic signals traveling between the optic fibers. The optic adaptor (100) includes a stationary portion (101) to be mounted to a fixture, and a moveable portion (102) that is manually moveable with respect to the stationary portion (101) for adjusting attenuation of the optic signal passing through the adaptor (100). The optic adapter (100) includes a two-part sleeve mount (30 and 40) as shown in Figs. 5 and 13 for accommodating a cylindrical sleeve (20). The cylindrical sleeve (20) is provided in the adapter (100) of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions into the adapter. In the rejection of the claims, the Examiner is contending that the sleeve mount (40) with a groove (41) is equivalent to the sleeve having a longitudinal slit of the independent claims. The Examiner also alleges that the body (11) and knob (60) are equivalent to the two-part sleeve mount of the independent claims and coupling ring (70) is equivalent to the means for securing of the independent claims.

The Zimmel application is directed to a fiber optic adapter and is provided by the Examiner as allegedly disclosing a means for preventing a split sleeve from rotating that protrudes into the slit between mount parts.

This combination of references fails to teach or suggest a sleeve having a longitudinal slit extending along an entire length of the sleeve that is secured against rotation as required by independent claims 17 and 36. As mentioned above, the Examiner is relying on sleeve mount (40) in the Wu patent as being equivalent to the cylindrical sleeve of the claimed invention. However, the sleeve mount (40) in the Wu patent includes a notch (41) formed therein that extends only partially along the length thereof (see Fig. 5 of the Wu patent). Accordingly, the Wu patent does not teach or suggest a cylindrical sleeve with a longitudinal slit extending along an entire length thereof.

Additionally, the Zimmel publication does not cure this deficiency. The Examiner contends that the Zimmel publication discloses a fiber optic adapter having a means (173) for preventing the split sleeve (152) from rotation. However, element (173) is a gap in the adapter (150) as discussed in paragraph [0036] of the Zimmel publication. Therefore, this gap cannot be considered a means for preventing rotation as required by the claims. Furthermore, the split sleeve (152) of the Zimmel publication is not equivalent to the

sleeve mount (40) of the Wu patent as the Examiner contends. The Wu patent already includes a split sleeve (20). Accordingly, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not have found it obvious to modify the sleeve mount (40) of the Wu patent to include a longitudinal slit extending along an entire length of the sleeve mount based on the teachings of the Zimmel publication.

Finally, claim 36 further requires that the means for securing are designed to engage in the longitudinal slit of the cylindrical sleeve. Both the Wu patent and the Zimmel publication fail to teach or suggest such a feature. The Zimmel publication discloses the use of an attenuator (154) positioned within slots (164) to secure the split sleeve (152) against rotation. As can be clearly seen in Fig. 13 of the Zimmel publication, the attenuator (154) never engages the longitudinal slit of the split sleeve (152).

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant believes that the subject matter of independent claims 17 and 36 is not rendered obvious by the Wu patent in view of the Zimmel publication. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 17 and 36 is respectfully requested.

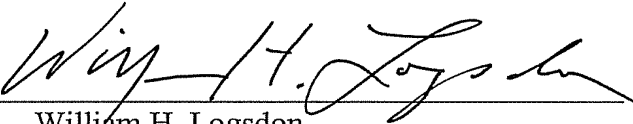
Claims 28-32, 34, 35 and 38-44 depend from and add further limitations to independent claims 17 and 36 or a subsequent dependent claim and are believed to be patentable for the reasons discussed hereinabove in connection with independent claims 17 and 36. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 28-32, 34, 35 and 38-44 is respectfully requested.

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Based on the foregoing remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of pending claims 17, 28-32, 34-36 and 38-44 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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